

## The Magnates and Their Opposition. 247

over Count Egrnont, the dashing and popular victor of St Quentin and Gravelines. Count Horn, admiral of the Netherlands, was another formidable recruit, the Marquis de Berghern a third, the Count of Brederode a fourth, Count Hoogstraten a fifth. Many of the lesser nobles, for whom he kept open table followed, such influential leadership, and thus the prince ere long stood at the head of a strong phalanx of aristocratic malcontents. Many of his followers were not personally men of high character. They lived fast, spent profusely, drank hard, were deep in debt, and cast longing eyes on the broad acres of the Church. At this initial stage we must not look for the heroic, high-toned principles of a later time. It was the people rather than the aristocracy that made the Dutch revolution what it afterwards became.

But even at this stage the malcontent Orange party had good grounds for opposition to the Consulta, which strove to govern the country in the interest of the royal autocracy, irrespective of the views of the other members of the Council of State. These aristocratic malcontents fastened on two grievances in their struggle with the masterful cardinal. The Spanish troops had not moved in spite of the royal promise, and what could their protracted presence betoken but some fell design against the liberties of the provinces ? Philip and the pope had, moreover, resolved to multiply the number of dioceses from four to seventeen, and according to the papal bull the scheme was meant to secure the extirpation of heretics as well as the better government of the Church. The measure might be in itself a step in the direction of efficiency, but it was obnoxious to the nobility as tending to increase the ecclesiastical power at their expense, and was certain to lead to an access of persecution. It was, besides, a distinct contravention of the provincial charters, particularly of the " Joyeuse Entree," and the danger of an accentuated ecclesiastical despotism rallied the people behind the nobles in the defence of rights and interests. Even the clergy were hostile, for the clergy did not relish the prospect of seventeen instead of four episcopal supervisors. Granvelle himself was not enamoured of the scheme, but acquiesced to please his master and retain his hold on power. He saw, too, the necessity of sending away the soldiers, and Philip was at last persuaded